G.R.A.S.P. Gazette

The journal of the Greater Richmond Atari Support Program
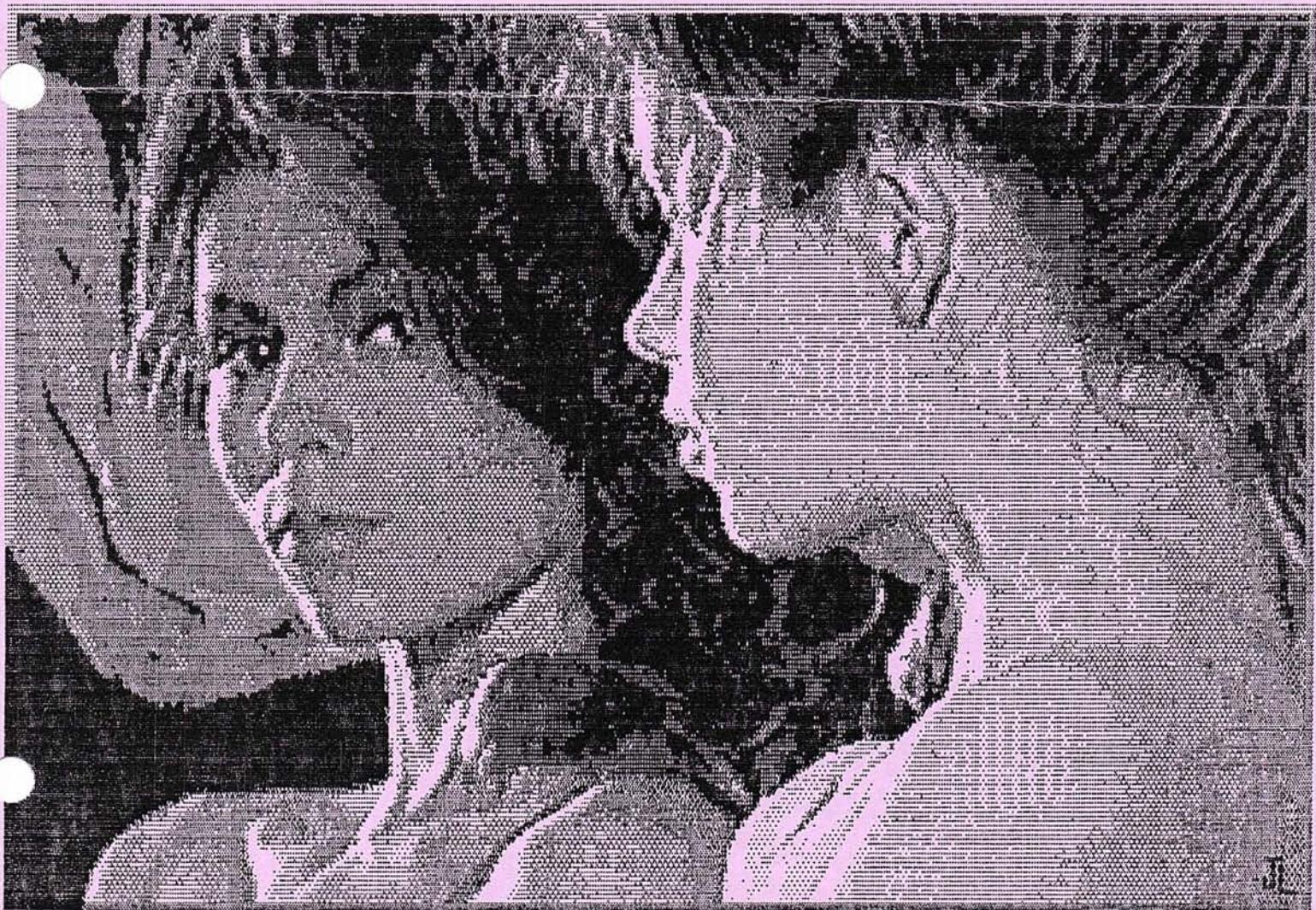
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Membership:
    Membership in G.R.A.S.P. is open to all persons interested in the Atari computer. Annual dues of $20.00 are payable apon entry and are $20.00 for 1 full year.

    Membership will include 11 monthly issues of the G.R.A.S.P. GAZETTE, no January issue and access to the Public Domain and Commercial libraries, group purchased, club discounts at participation retailers, and participation in drawings.

Meetings:
    Meetings are held the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 7:00-09:00p.m. at the Lyndale Baptist Church on Hull St. Any and all persons interested in Atari computers are welcome!

EDITOR'S CLIPBOARD

I hope to keep this editorial short and sweet. Why you ask? Because I really don't have much to say and still can't think of anything. One thing though, this month I still didn't get any articles from members to run. I guess my little plea for help at the last meeting didn't really register. Haven't had time? No ideas??? No ads?

Cliff brought me an article from the Richmond-Times Dispatch on lack of recognition for Atari. I didn't print it because for it to have been really effective I would have had to print it word for word. I wanted to run it. It was an article by an AP newspaperman in New York. So I called the Richmond Newspapers and talked my way up to the managing editor.He told me it sounds like it would be a good idea to print it, but check with the Associated Press first. I called the AP wire service here in Richmond and they thought it could be run in this newsletter, but check with the author of the article first and he gave me the phone number in New York City. I called AP, asked for the author and he told me that piece is copyrighted, anything he writes and is run in any paper is copyrighted, but if I did run it, well "*I can't track down everybody that reprints my material and prosecute them, I'd never get any work done*" So...I didn't run it for I don't want to get myself or the club into any type of legal trouble. Note to other newsletter editors, watch what you print, most stuff has a copyright on it unless "specifically" stated otherwise.

There, I said more than I thought I would. The reason the print looks so big here is because I'm trying to fill the entire second column.

P.S Just heard Atari bought a chain of 67 software stores out west somewhere. I'll have more for the next newsletter. P.S.S. The next issue of the G.R.A.S.P. GAZETTE will be about 2 weeks late. For now - 73 ....
Tom Marvin, Editor.

ATARI NEWS

for MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE
July '87 by John Nagy(Taken in part)

OPTIMIZED SYSTEMS SOFTWARE (OSS) has a new TOOLKIT for BASIC XL, adding all the power of BASIC XE except the EXTENDED PROGRAM AREA. The new extensions file for BASIC XL will include those amazing add-ons like SORTUP and SORTDOWN, to name a few. By the way, OSS also says NO RUNTIME PACKAGE for BASIC EX will be released, so don't expect too many "extended" PD gems to surface.

Another coup for USER GROUPS: SPRINGBOARD SOFTWARE, makers of NEWSROOM, CERTIFICATE MAKER, etc. for almost everybody but ATARI, has decided to rethink their position and is prepping an 8-bit ATARI version of NEWSROOM, slated for fall release. A letter writing campaign was initiated by several user groups and carried forward by ANTIC MAGAZINE. ST versions of all SPRINGBOARD products are either already being shipped or are being developed.

MINDSCAPE SOFTWARE, makers of some remarkable software for the ST, has bought out CBS SOFTWARE and has re-released some titles from the CBS collection. PLUTOS, a fabulous MINDSCAPE arcade game for the ST, is now legitimately released and features "lots of" enhancements over the pirate beta version that has been floating around BBS's a "public domain" item. Many clubs put the game in their software libraries, not knowing it was not PD.   First it was ATARI PLANETARIUM, now, AUTODUEL, a new game from ORIGIN SYSTEMS, is said not to run on INDUS or ICD DOUBLER equipped ATARI 1050 disk drives due to a new copy protection scheme. More and more, these are turning into USE protection schemes. Hardware-specific software is a growing trend- be sure you get a return privilege from a reputable dealer to protect YOURSELF.

NATIONAL REVIEW magazine, July 3, 1987: "Soviet fad for personal computers is wearing off. Problems: the machines are lousy, and the Soviets forgot to make software. Exception: CHess champ Gary Kasparov donated 26 ATARI 130's to the KOMYUTER youth club." Anybody plan to follow up and see if the Iron Curtain will pass PD SOFTWARE?

HAPPY for the ST? Yes, but not yet. Word has it that a CART version of a HAPPY software package will be released for the ST that will allow a "photocopy" of any disk... ANY DISK... ANY FORMAT... to be made in an St. Yes, AMIGA, PC, ANYTHING. Sounds interesting! Just more proof that the ATARI is the machine that can be ANYTHING if it tries.

Taken in part from ZMAG66 for Aug. '87
ZMAG SOFTWARE REVIEW..
The NEW Express BBS..By: Keith Ledbetter-< BBS Express! Professional> -Since everyone seems to be asking me all the time what the new version of BBS Express! is going to be like, I thought I'd throw together a little overview of the new system. First, let's talk about the upgrade. This upgrade is for the *850 VERSION* of the BBS first, and is being called 'BBS Express! Professional'. This version is targeted at the serious, big-system Sysop. Also, this upgrade will ONLY run on Spartados 3.2x or greater. TDLINE and ZHAND must be installed. This means that the RTIME 8 is fully supported (along with SpartaDOS's 'internal' software clock if you don't have an RTime 8 cartridge). What do I mean by 'big-system'? Well, the MOST important thing with BBS Express! professional is that you have a RAMDISK, since every command (and I mean *EVERY* command -- even ASCII/ATASCII toggle!) is an 'external command', and must be loaded from a disk. Without a RAMdisk or a Hard Disk to load these commands from, the BBS is going to be painfully slow (you might be able to survive with a US Doubler'ed 1050 in high speed). With a ramdisk or Hard Disk, all commands load almost instantaneously. Now, don't get me wrong -- you don't HAVE to have a large ramdisk or a Hard Disk to run BBS Express! Pro, but it is highly recommended because of slow floppy disk access times. BBS Express! Pro is written in 100% machine language. The main 'shell' of the BBS sits in memory from $3000 - $6000. This shell contains common routines that are accessed a lot by the external, chained programs (such as the routines to display strings to the modem, get input from the modem, view text files, etc). Also, there are system vectors that you machine-language-programming sysops can use to access these shell commands to easily and quickly write your own commands!All of the 'external commands' (such as the message base processor, the call-for-sysop command, the browse downloads command, etc) are loaded into memory at $6000 when they are needed. The beauty in this type of a system is that we are now no longer limited by the machine's memory space. Each external command can be up to 16K in length (larger than just about any DOS you'll ever run).The BBS is currently about 1 month (maybe) away from going into full BETA test, (the primary Beta Test site will be MOUSE BBS 219-674-9288) and hopefully a long BETA-test period will not be needed... (you haven't really lived until you write a fully threaded message base processor in machine language! yuk!). Another nice feature of the 'modularized layout' is that if there happens to be a bug in one of the external commands, only THAT command has to be changed. This sure makes it convenient for putting updated or modified commands in the download section of the support BBS. OK, enough of this garbage, you say? You
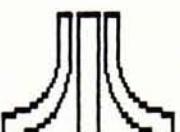
want to know what it CAN DO!?!? Well, here's a list of the currently in and proposed functions. Don't hold me to all of these; like I said, some are currently in, and others in this list are pure blue-sky and may not be out in the INITIAL release. But, then again, they can easily be written later as modules, put on the support BBS, and be downloaded by you. You would then just add the letter of the command to invoke the new module to your 'command table definition', and you now have a new command!*The ones marked below with an '*' will DEFINITELY be in the initial release. Those marked with an '-' are planned to be initially released or be available for download sometime after the initial release.

* 40 and 80 column support, along with separate ATASCII/ASCII menu file areas.
* 300/1200/2400/9600 baud support. The 9600 is really sort of a fluke, but it's there anyway. If ANYONE ever tells you that their 8-bit Atari program can support full 9600 baud, you tell them that I said they are full of.... well, never mind.
* Fully threaded message bases (see replies, reply, follow thread, etc).
* You can edit messages you previously posted.
- Certain messages can be 'locked' by the SysOp so that they will not be deleted by the 'automatic deletion' portion of the message base processor.
* Up to 32 different message bases, each one having up to 250 4000-byte messages.
* File browsing by the mask you enter (such as '*.*' or '*.COM', etc). Identical to the ST version of the BBS.
* More download files??? How about 516,128 possible download files? That should make even Mr. Z happy! The BBS has 32 possible 'file SIG areas', each one allowing up to 16,129 files!!
* Download files now use the entire 8 character name and 3 char extender.
* Full file descriptions on each download file. Each file can have a description of up to 240 characters.
* Standard XModem, CRC XModem, and YMODEM support.
* FULL on-line user editor that can be accessed either from on-line or from the 'waiting for call' screen.
* Each user has 320 'security flags' that you can turn on or off to control virtually every action they can take. These flags control such things as:'Which message bases can this user READ' 'Which message bases can this user POST on' 'Which file areas can this user access' Incredibly easy to set up a user to have full sysop levels on one message base, but absolutely NO power on any other. Great for assigning co-sysops to different areas of your BBS.
- Up to 32 trackable surveys, each one having an unlimited (only by disk space) number of questions.
* Fully functional 'DOS Command' area that

allows the following commands (available from on-line or waiting-for-call screen):
DIR - disk directory ERASE - erase file(s)
CHAT - turn chat mode on/off
CREDIR - create a subdirectory
DELDIR - delete a subdirectory
CWD - change working directory
LOCK - lock a diskette
UNLOCK - unlock a diskette
PROTECT - protect a file
UNPROTECT - unprotect a file
AINIT - initialize a diskette
CHKDSK - display disk statistics
          (free space, etc)
TYPE - view a text file ?
DIR - display current default
          subdirectory
UPLOADS - browse/validate new upload
          files
COPY - copy file(s)
RENAME - rename file(s)
TIME - set time
DATE - set date
- The following available from the
  'Waiting for Call' screen:
* Full user editor
* Enter DOS commands
* Browse / Validate new Upload Files
* Toggle chat mode on/off
* 5 different 'logon' modes
* Exit to DOS
- Display today's call log
- Print / Delete today's call log
- Terminal program
- Change SYSDATA file definitions
There are probably tons more things that I can't remember right now. I'm really excited about this version of the BBS because it is EXPANDABLE. Probably the best comparison I can think of is SpartaDOS; almost every command there is external. If you want a new command, you just put a new .COM file on your disk, right? Well, that's basically it with BBS Express! Pro, too. You put the new .CMD file on the drive, change your Command Table Definition to say something like 'key 'Z' will invoke the command file ADVENTUR.CMD', and that's all there is to it (there can be up to 35 different commands invoked from the main Command: prompt).
Also, since there is no PROMPT.OBJ file in BBS Express! Pro, most of the source code for the external BBS commands will provided on the disk (in MAC/65 format). Should be no problem for you (or someone you know) to customize prompts to your liking.
Have you got some other ideas you'd like to see included? Well, logon to Midnight Express! and leave a message in the 'registered owners' section and I'll be sure to put them on the 'wish-list'.
Now, about the time-tables...when?? We, that's really hard to say. This BBS version is a MAJOR undertaking, and you all know how I feel about letting products out the door too soon (not to mention that it's being written only in my 'spare' time,

whatever that is). There's nothing I hate more than a program being released with bugs in it. I think a reasonable date to shoot for would be around the first of next year.
, those of you who are getting a little upset with some of the limits of the current version (especially the limited number of download files) -- stay with us just a little bit longer.
On a closing note I'd like to say 'thanks' to all of you who have supported both myself and Orion Micro Systems in the past by purchasing our BBS program. You have helped us prove that there is STILL some money to be made on the 8 bit Atari if you put out good products at fair prices. Take care, Keith Ledbetter

LOOK

FOR SALE:

LATERAL THINKING
by Earl Nightingale(Reprinted from the N.A.C.E.C., South Africa Newsletter, Jan-Feb, 1987)

Here's a little story to test how good a thinker your are: Many years ago when a person who owed money could be thrown in jail, a merchant in London had the misfortune to owe a huge sum to a money-lender. The money-lender, who was old and ugly, fancied the merchant's beautiful young daughter. He proposed a bargain. He said he would cancel the merchants debt if he could have the girl instead. Both the merchant and his daughter were horrified at the proposal. So the cunning money-lender proposed that they let Providence decide the matter. He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money-bag and then the girl would pick out one of the pebbles. If she chose the black pebble she would become his wife and her father's debt would be cancelled. If she chose the white pebble she would stay with her father and the debt would still be cancelled, but if she refused to pick out a pebble her father would be thrown into jail and she would starve. Reluctantly the merchant agreed. They were standing on a pebble-strewn path in the merchants garden as they talked and the money-lender stooped down to pick up the two pebbles. As he did, the girl, sharp-eyed with fright, noticed that he pickup up two black pebbles and put them into the money-bag. He then asked the girl to pick out the pebble that was to decide her fate and the fate of her father. Imagine that you are standing on the path in the merchant's garden. What would you have done if you had been the girl? If you had to advise her what would you have adviser her to do?What type of thinking would you use to solve the problem? You may think that careful logical analysis must solve the problem if there is a solution. This type of thinking is straightforward vertical thinking. The other type of thinking is lateral thinking. Vertical thinkers are usually not much help to a girl in this situation. The way they analyze it, there are three possibilities:1) The girl should refuse to take a pebble,2) The girl should show that there are two black pebbles in the bag and expose the money-lender as a cheat,3) The girl should take a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father from prison.None of these suggestions is very helpful, for if the girl does take a pebble then she has to marry the money-lender. If not, her father goes to prison. The girl in the story put her hand into the money-bag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it she fumbled and let if fall to the path where it was immediately lost among all the others."Oh, how clumsy of me", she said, "But never mind--if you look into the bag you will be able to tell which pebble I took by the

Taken in part from ZMAGAZINE 65
August 7, 1987 (c)1987 Syndicate
Xx ZMAG HUMOR
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Hey all! What another article from me in the same issue of ZMAG? This one is just for chuckles, I hope you enjoy it. No doubt you have figured out by now that I do not make a living off the Oasis BBS System! So what does Leo Newman do for a living, well folks I am one of those guys all the TV shows make fun of. Have you ever wanted to spend a nice boring evening at home, then call an insurance agent out to your house. Well that's how I make my living, I am and have been an insurance agent for the past 14 years.

The following are actual statements that have been collected over those many years. They are statements found on actual insurance claim forms where car drivers had attempted to summarize the details of an auto accident in the fewest words possible. The instance of faulty writing serve to confirm that even incompetent writing may be highly humorous. I hope you enjoy.
-Coming home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have.
-The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intentions.

-I thought my window was down, but I found out it was up when I put my head through it.
-I collided with a stopped truck coming the other way.
-A truck backed thru my windshield int. .y wife's face.
-The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.
-I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.
-In my attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole.
-I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision and I didn't see the car.
-I was on my way to the Doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to have an accident.
-My car was legally parked, as it backed into the other auto.
-I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.-The pedestrian had no idea which direction to run, so I ran over him.
-A pedestrian hit me and went under my car.
-I was sure the old fellow would never make it to the other side of he road when I struck him.
-I saw a slow moving, sad faced old gentleman, as he bounced off the roof of

my car.
-An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.
- told the police I was not injured, but removing my hat, I found that I had a fractured skull.
-The indirect cause of the accident was a little guy with a big mouth.
-I was thrown from my car as it left the road. I was found in a ditch by some stray cows.
-To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front, I struck the pedestrian.
-The telephone pole was approaching, I was attempting to swerve out of its way, when it struck the front end.
-As I approached the intersection, a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no stop sign ever appeared before. I was unable to stop in time to avoid the accident.

ST CONFERENCE ON GEnie
dated about 8/7/87
(Taken in part, the most improtant!)
<[Mike Ferrara] STX-PRERSS>I have ONE question! Where's the BLITTER??!?!
<NHARRIS> Well, they seem to be coming in the Mega ST's -- there's one on Darryl's desk & another on Mark's .. do any of you folks know when it's coming as an upgrade?
<[Jimbo@Atari] JTITTSLER> I am not certain.
<[Darryl@ATARI] DMAY> My Mega with Blitter s running right now.
  Andy Eddy] KIDX> Two quick ones: Has the mega pricing been set? And what effect will the new Tandy PC-comps have on the Atari PC strategy?
<NHARRIS> Yes, we've set the retail pricing on the Mega ST computers, the Mega ST2 will sell for $1699 with Monochrome, $1899 with RGB. The Mega ST4 is $2399 with mono, $2599 with color. Please keep some things in mind regarding these prices -- 1. they are suggested list 2. we're improving dealer margins, so the numbers may seem a little high now 3. These are the numbers today, I really can't comment on the new Tandy systems until I know more about them. Jim, have you looked into them?
(Ed. Skipping to the end:)
<ERGABELER> Neil, does your new marketing plan exclude the small dealers, who have supported you thus far, from selling the megas to their established clients? (Ed Note: Roland Gaberler of NOVATARI IN D.C. with L&Y in mind.)
<NHARRIS> We don't exclude any current dealers per se.. but to go after the business market, some will have to improve or be left behind.

microdaft
19 Harbor Drive
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(201)663-0202
August 22, 1987

NEW PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear Atari User,
Microdaft is proud to announce that we will be releasing a couple of very exciting new software programs for the Atari 8-bit computers.
Dropzone and **Solar Star** bring arcade quality action, graphics, and sound to your Atari computer like you have never seen before. These superbly programmed masterpieces of intense action and dazzling graphics will make **Dropzone** and **Solar Star** instant Atari favorites.
Dropzone will put you up against some of the most relentless aliens ever to hit a computer screen, as you attempt to rescue your men from the planet's deadly surface.
In **Solar Star**, the computer that was designed to protect the solar grids now guards them with deadly force, and it is up to you to recover as many crystals from the lethal grids as possible.
Look for our two page advertisement in the upcoming October issue of ANALOG Computing, and ask your favorite Atari dealer about **Dropzone** and **Solar Star**.
Dropzone and **Solar Star** have a realease date of October 1, 1987, and will retail for only $24.95 each.
Sincerely, Eli Tomlinson, President

ATARI RUMORS
(Reprinted from ZMAG Issue #60, July 4th, 1987)
  DTACK BASIC is touted to be the fastest ST BASIC available today. A benchmark test between DTACK, GFA, Fast, and the newest ST BASIC showed **DTACK BASIC** to be the fastest by a substantial margin. The benchmark used was in an advertisement that appeared on page 45 of the May 1987 "ST Applications" magazine.

## EPYX...ARE THEY LISTENING?
  Rumors abound on reasons why Epyx has practically refused to support the 8-bit line of Ataris. However, the folks at Epyx seem to be waking up to our cries. Apparently, many Atari users have mailed in letters to Epyx requesting (or maybe even demanding?) them to release several of their most popular titles such as "Destroyer", "Summer Games II", "Winter Games", "World Games", and "Championship Wrestling". Keep those letters coming!!
  Send all requestes/demands to:

          EPYX, Inc.
          600 Galveston Drive
          Redwood City, CA 94063
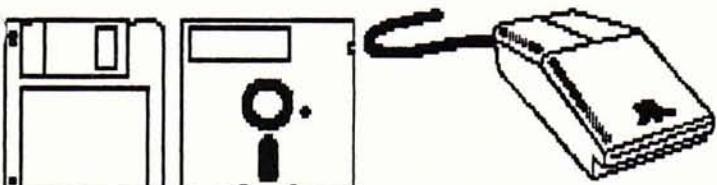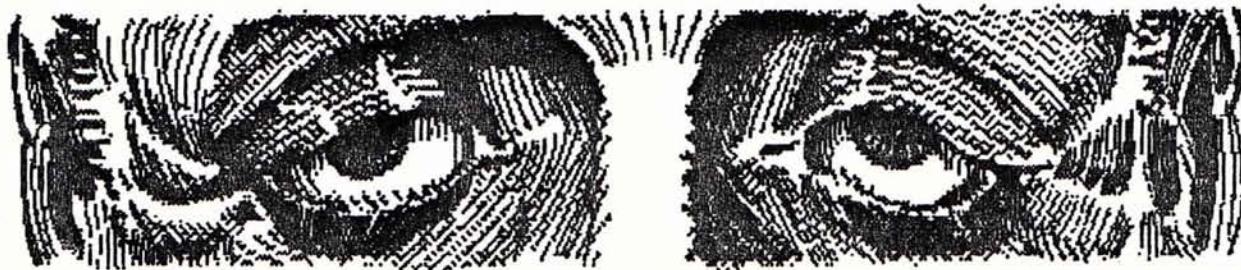
"ANOTHER ISSUE FINISHED. - - AT LAST!!!"

G.R.A.S.P. GAZETTE

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23224

GREATER RICHMOND ATARI SUPPORT PROGRAM

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